Renowned experts challenge Hinduphobia and misunderstanding about Hindutva

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INDIA KNOWLEDGE CONSORTIUM (INK)

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On Saturday 4th September 2021, speaking at the international conference on “Understanding Hindutva and Hinduphobia” organised by the India Knowledge Consortium (INK), renowned experts on the history and religious studies have challenged the misleading campaigns that malign Hindu culture and cause Hinduphobia.

The prevalence of serious prejudices against Hindus is a matter of serious concern. The persistent anti-Hindu messaging has resulted in widespread Hinduphobia in academia, press and media. There have been relatively modest initiatives to engage in scholarly and meaningful discussions to understand Hindutva. The conference addressed this void by bringing together well-known and widely respected academic scholars and historians to explore the origins and prevalence of Hinduphobia, and possible strategies to resolve the issues affecting Hindus worldwide.

Hindutva is rooted in principles of universal acceptance and tolerance of all beliefs and faiths. Often, misunderstandings about Hindutva are created through wilful misrepresentations of its traditions, practices and culture. Elucidating the concept of Hindutva, Bengaluru based historian, Dr Vikram Sampath, said: “Those who criticise Hindutva neither understand its historical evolution nor its progressive qualities. Hindutva is the application of universal principles of Hinduism”.

Hinduphobia is a set of prejudiced and derogatory attitudes and behaviours towards Hindus. A current academic approach to research on Hinduism has resulted in delinking positive contributions of Hindus such as Yoga, Pranayama, Ayurveda etc. Explaining the origins of Hinduphobia and exploring the main causes for its propagation, Professor Makarand Paranjape said, “Scholars who demonise Hindutva are not ‘Historians’, they are ‘Distortians’! Attacks on Hindus anywhere in the world should stop and more resources should be put to improve the linguistic skills to enable reading of historical texts in different languages to educate the younger generation”.

The widespread prevalence of Hinduphobia is a matter of serious concern. Despite significant evidence offered by both eastern and western scholars about its positive contributions, prejudiced scholars have tried to project Hindutva in a negative light. Examining the reasons for this abstraction from the reality, award-winning scholar and professor of History at Shawnee State University, Prof Lavanya Vemsani said, “Anyone who questions the false narratives about India and Hinduism is vilified. It does not stop with academia and has become fashionable to talk about Hindu extremism while in reality there is no Hindu violence anywhere in the world”.

More than 2500 people from 50+ countries across the globe joined the conference and actively participated and asked questions. INK hopes that academics across the world would revisit the current biased framework being promoted while analysing Hindutva. Such an effort would contribute to developing humane interpretations that would add to the knowledge about Hindutva and Hinduism.

Recording of the conference: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-UJ7FZEPSk

About India Knowledge Consortium (INK):

INK is a global organisation of academics who are interested in research about India. The INK platform offers an opportunity to share research, opinions and discussion on India related matters by bringing together a cohesive group of like-minded academicians. INK aims to promote scholarship on India that is based on facts and highlights India’s relevance and role in the global community of nations.

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